



3.9.12

My submission to the Inquiry into workplace bullying.

My name is

In late 2009 while working as a high school teacher at a remote Aboriginal school in NT, the Aboriginal principal threatened to "kill me, hang me from the tress, spear me and have her family/brothers come and burn down my house" all because I and others had attempted to report her for actively and aggressively over many years abusing her position to coerce in total quite large amounts of money from her teaching staff.

Her boss at the time, a man called , tried to cover this up by not reporting it to anyone. I had to call the CEO personally to get us (myself plus two other staff members) airlifted to safety and we had to go to the Police by ourselves. The NT only decided to help us once the Police were involved.

From that point on, and various other senior executives in have been on a witch hunt against me. I had to become an official government whistleblower with the Office of Public Interest Disclosures to try and give myself some legal protection from the myriad of retaliatory actions against me. In desperation I ended up having to go to the media here in the NT to try to get them to stop and to highlight this tragic case of maladministration, read the article here:

Through Freedom of Information requests over the last two years I have managed to uncover this witch hunt, with again at the forefront of it. He is what I consider to be a pathological bully, someone who won't stop until he gets 'his prize' (either my complete mental breakdown – I've already been on Workers Compensation for the death threats and related stress – or the total destruction of my personal and professional reputation – see attachments included with this submission). Meanwhile he appears to be protected by the other senior executives in and I have to suffer 'on the coal face' so to speak.

Through inaction I was forced to take legal action early this year against and a Principal he guided to attack me too (in which we settled out of court recently, but then when I asked the CEO what disciplinary action had been taken against for threatening to 'get a gun licence' [to deal with me], I got a letter from the head of Legal (a woman who had previously pointed her finger in my face during an Anti-discrimination so-called conciliation meeting and said "I'm going to blow you out of the water , you know no one in likes you, don't you?") accusing me of harassment of , the CEO!

This group of people know no bounds when it comes to Institutionalised bullying. I have run the full gamut – threats from my Principal to kill me and burn my house down (with me in it presumably), departmental cover up, threats from own Legal Unit, attacks on my reputation: been called 'mentally unstable' by senior managers in writing, had an HR dirt file started on me, attacks on my ability to get a job and therefore maintain a career: had a work reference deliberately withheld from me so that I couldn't get another job, had a position denied to me while it was still there and available to another applicant, been called 'a trained tattooed monkey' and 'vermin/varmitt' in writing, been threatened with performance management procedures without evidence of wrongdoing on my part, been called 'a threat to the Department' in writing, had crucial documents that I had requested through FOI deleted by employees and am constantly now on guard, meaning I can never truly relax and enjoy my work the way I used to before I dared to challenge the Aboriginal Principal and her protectors in the NT government Dept.

Here are some of the direct quotes used:

"There is real concern for his mental health and for him to be any more remote [sic] outs us at risk."

1. *"Oh!!!! Mental health facilities are desperately needed and sends a shiver through me. On another matter how do you get a gun licence in the Territory?????????????"*

2. *"Lol. Walk into the Police station and tell them you have a varmitt problem..... Have a happy day!"*

3. *"Subject: Reference for the trained tattooed monkey
Attachment: reference.docx"
"Would you mind looking it over and let me know if it sounds too positive?"*

Not one person sacked but instead it is me who gets threatened with 'bringing the Department into disrepute'. See email below. Incidentally when I asked for time to discuss others' bullying towards me I was ignored twice and no one has ever got in touch with me regarding anything I have written. Another classic intimidation tactic.

4. From:

Sent: Monday, 13 August 2012 4:27 PM

To:

Subject: Advice regarding your email of 6 August 2012

Dear Mr

I refer to your email message titled "Pack Attack" sent on Monday 6 August 2012 to Human Resource Services employees who are under my supervision. Your message was also copied to numerous other employees and other persons.

I am concerned that the tone and language of your message may be in breach of the principles of conduct that all NTPS employees must adhere to under the Public Sector Employment and Management Act (section 5F). I am further concerned that comments in your message directed at in particular may constitute bullying, harassment and/or inappropriate workplace behaviour.

As a consequence I have referred your message, and my concerns, to the Director of School Performance, for her to consider and take the action, if any, she considers appropriate.

Yours sincerely

No wonder there are struggles to get educators to commit any of their working life to the NT if this is the kind of thing hard working remote bush teachers have to endure. It should be a national embarrassment; instead they wear it as some kind of perverse badge of honour. Quite sickening.

It is a testament to my and others' resilience and desire to teach disadvantaged children in Australia that we are still standing and still prepared to work in this sometimes toxic and dangerous work environment. I personally refuse to give up. I refuse to be beaten down by these bullies.

If we don't stand up and speak out then nothing will change. The fight for recognition, accountability and an official apology continues....

With regards to disciplinary actions taken against dangerous workplace bullies like in positions of power: having in charge of their own people is like asking Dracula to be in charge of the blood bank. There are too many employees in the upper echelons who simply protect their friends in high places. There needs to be much more outside scrutiny of their processes and procedures. Right now very little of it is under any cross-jurisdictional scrutiny, they can drag it out, they can ignore you, they can say things were investigated properly when they aren't – there are many tools and tactics they can use to keep control of the information and outcome and there is nothing we as employees can do about that. Our jobs are difficult enough as classroom teachers without the people above attacking us at the same time.

Improvements? It's a whole work ethos that needs to change and it's going to be very difficult to do that in the short term. Make some high profile examples of people, show a zero tolerance approach to bullying no matter where it occurs – a few high level managers or executives openly sacked for egregious behaviours that destroy people and their teaching careers and then a very public apology will go a long way to improving the situation for those coming into teaching after me.

